

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00
DOTE-00 FMC-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 CG-00 DLOS-09
OES-06 TRSY-02 L-03 EUR-12 AGR-05 /062 W
-----311420Z 095069 /47

R 310955Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6577
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EWWT MZ KE TZ MA MP UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET SHIPPING PRESENCE IN EAST AFRICA

REF: STATE 63826

1. A SHIPPING AGENT FROM ONE OF MAURITIUS' MAJOR PRIVATE IMPORT-EXPORT FIRMS TOLD EMBOFF THAT "COMPARABILITY" OF SOVIET AND WESTERN SHIPPING RATES IS VERY DIFFICULT TO JUDGE IN GENERAL TERMS BECAUSE THE RATES VARY ACCORDING TO THE SPECIFIC ITEM OR CATEGORY, AND THEY NUMBER IN THE HUNDREDS. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT MOST OF THE EUROPEAN OR WESTERN SHIPPING RATES ARE SET BY CONVENTIONS, AND ARE USUALLY DIFFERENT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL RATE. AN EXAMPLE, HE SAID, IS THE LONDON CONVENTION ON SUGAR SHIPPING RATES, IN WHICH THE SOVIETS DID NOT PARTICIPATE, THAT IS HIGHER THAN THE INTERNATIONAL RATE. IN GENERAL, HE BELIEVED THAT SOVIET SHIPPING RATES ON MOST ITEMS ARE VERY COMPETITIVE BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT EXPERIENCED THE RATE INCREASES OF THE EUROPEAN SHIPPING COMPANIES. HE SAID THAT SOVIET SHIPPING IN MAURITIUS HAD REMAINED AT A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FAIRLY CONSTANT LEVEL, EXCEPT FOR THEIR ENTRY INTO THE SUGAR TRANSPORT MARKET FROM MAURITIUS TO LONDON.

2. POGOSOV, THE SOVIET COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR IN MAURITIUS, CONFIRMED THE ABOVE INFORMATION TO EMBOFF, NOTING THAT THE LONDON CONVENTION RATE HAS GONE UP TWICE WITHIN THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS, BY 10 AND 7 PERCENT AND IS THEREFORE HIGHER

THAN THE SOVIET, OR INTERNATIONAL, RATE. HE SAID THAT THE TOTAL VOLUME OF SOVIET SHIPPING SHOWED LITTLE INCREASE DURING 1976 OVER 1975, ALTHOUGH THEY COULD HAVE INCREASED IT HAD THEY "GONE AFTER" THE BUSINESS. THE REASON WHY THEY DIDN'T GO AFTER IT, ACCORDING TO POGOSOV IS THAT THEY DIDN'T WANT TO "CLASH" IN MAURITIUS WITH THE EUROPEAN SHIPPING INTERESTS. (COMMENT: THIS PROBABLY MEANS THAT THEY DIDN'T WANT TO CREATE REPERCUSSIONS IN LONDON BY TAKING AWAY BUSINESS IN THE LIMITED MAURITIAN MARKET.) HE WOULD NOT SPECIFY HOW MUCH SUGAR THEY HAD SHIPPED, BUT SAID THAT TOTAL SOVIET SHIPPING IN MAURITIUS LAST YEAR WAS LESS THAN 100,000 TONS. HE SAID THE SHIPPING IS RESTRICTED TO THE MAURITIUS - LONDON SUGAR RUN (RETURNING EMPTY BECUASE SUGAR CARGO SHIPS CAN CARRY NO OTHER ITEMS), AND THE EAST AFRICA "CIRCUIT" OF DAR-ES-SALAAM, MAPUTO, AND OTHERS (UNSPECIFIED).

3. ALTHOUGH THERE WERE NEARLY 100 SOVIET SHIPS, NAVAL AND NON-NAVAL, WHICH CALLED AT PORT LOUIS DURING 1976, ONLY APPROXIMATELY 20 WERE COMMERCIAL CARGO VESSELS. KEELEY

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